

Submitted February 23, 2005
Approved As Written
Date February 23, 2005

MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 2-05
Wednesday, January 26, 2005

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the City Hall Council Chamber Room at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 26, 2005

PRESENT

Frank Hilton, Acting Chair
Gerald Holtz Brigitta Mullican
Kate Ostell Robin Wiener

Absent: John Britton
Steven Johnson

Present: Bob Spalding, Chief of Planning
Sandra Block, Assistant City Attorney
Scott Parker, Planner III
Cas Chasten, Planner III
Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary

RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Special Exception Application SPX2004-00351, Alan Yanaway (Montgomery College)

The applicant proposes to construct an interim surface parking lot on the subject property currently owned by Montgomery County Public Schools. The parking lot is for the community college's use for student and staff parking needs until structured parking facilities can be constructed on campus. The property is located at 850 Hungerford Drive.

Commissioner Hilton questioned whether notices were sent to the adjacent property owners of this site. Mr. Chasten replied that notices were sent out to adjacent property owners.

Mr. Chasten presented an overview of the staff report. Mr. Chasten stated that Montgomery Community College (MCC) is proposing to expand the eastern most parking lot, located on the former George Washington Carver High School property, which now serves as the headquarters for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Board of Education. The overall Carver Center property is approximately 30 acres in size and is owned by MCPS. The Board of Education currently leases 75 of the 387-space parking lot, which is located in the front eastern area of the site, as overflow parking for its students and staff. MCPS has authorized the applicant, MCC to file the subject special exception to expand and construct new surface parking facilities.

Mr. Chasten stated that a total of 438 new parking spaces would be created under the expansion proposal. Once completed, there would be a total of 719 parking spaces provided. All but 30 of the new 438 parking spaces created would be for the exclusive use of MCC students and staff. The remaining 281 parking spaces, plus the noted thirty new spaces will be designated for the use of MCPS Board of Education staff and visitors.

Mr. Chasten stated that none of the Carver Center's site building facilities would be altered or expanded under the subject request. In its October 2004 review, the Historic District Commission (HDC) requested that new plantings along Mannakee Street and those that will be planted within the new parking facilities be planted so as not to obstruct the view of the original Carver building. The HDC deemed it important that an appropriate view-scape be maintained so that it would look westward from Hungerford Drive and Mannakee Street onto the former building.

After further discussion regarding the special exception process and concerns regarding the crosswalk across Mannakee Street from the parking lot and whether the parking lot would be routinely patrolled, Ernie Peek with WEDGCO Engineering and Dave Kaplan presented the applicant's request. Mr. Peek provided information with regard to the planned parking lot expansion proposal. He explained that they are putting in a crosswalk with a flashing light if it is warranted. He also stated that there would be security phones located in the parking lot and campus security will routinely patrol the parking lot. Mr. Peek discussed the landscaping to serve as added screening and buffering between the proposed parking lot and residential dwellings located to the south of the site, and handicapped parking. Mr. Peek stated that the MCC would prefer to have the handicapped close to the buildings. They do not want to make the handicapped people park in the parking lot.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Commission discussed concerns regarding Condition #2 concerning handicapped parking spaces, potential for vehicular queuing on Mannakee Street by persons attempting to access the new larger student/staff parking lot, status of MCC future plans for constructing additional on-campus structured and/or non-structured parking facilities, whether the parking lot would be permanent and how long does MCC think it will be needed, MCC parking enforcement and potential for non MCC students and staff using parking lot, safety concerns about the crosswalk with regard to providing a painted crosswalk across Mannakee Street from the parking lot, and the applicant should also provide a pedestrian crossing signal or a flashing beacon to alert motorists to the pedestrian crossing.

Commissioner Mullican moved, seconded by Commissioner Holtz to recommend approval of Special Exception Application SPX2004-00351, Alan Yanaway (Montgomery College) to the Board of Appeals per staff recommendations subject to amending Condition #2 to read "Handicapped parking spaces, which are required to be provided for the subject parking lot must be provided on campus in proportion with the number of spaces required for the new parking lot"; and, that additional landscaping and plantings must be installed along the site's southern lot line serving s additional screening and buffer between the parking lot and neighboring residential dwellings to the south of the site. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

COMMISSION ITEMS

Chief of Planning's Report

Mr. Spalding announced that this would be his last meeting with the Planning Commission. He will be leaving his position for another job. He thanked the Planning Commission, staff, and everybody else he had been involved with in the City for the last six and a half years, for it has been extremely interesting and he has enjoyed it. He said he is looking forward to Rockville's future and being able to walk through the Town Square. He also announced that Scott Parker has been named the Acting Chief of Planning and Friday will be his first day.

Commissioner Hilton stated that he has been on the Commission since 1999 and there have been some long Wednesday nights with Mr. Spalding. Commissioner Hilton thanked Mr. Spalding for his sense of humor at appropriate times, his excellent counsel to this Commission, and his ability to accept when the Commission was opposed to his recommendations. Commissioner Hilton said he also looks forward to the fact that Mr. Spalding will be living in the community and sharing with them the fruits of all of his labors for the last many years. Commissioner Hilton added that Mr. Spalding's history says that he leaves for a while, but he comes back. Therefore, the City looks forward to his return.

ADJOURN

After further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary